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10 EMERSON PLACE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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Mr. Chairman:

Since we have just approved the final plans for the skating rink, swimming pool, and clubhouse facilities to be constructed by the M.D.C. in the Washington Park Urban Renewal Project Area, I feel that, in light of recent public statements made concerning the B.R.A.'s role in this project, the true facts should be presented.

First, it should be noted that the recreational facilities at Washington Park received top priority from all involved at the B.R.A., particularly the Washington Park architects.

Contrary to an impression erroneously created by these public statements, the B.R.A. is not guilty of slowing things down. The B.R.A. may have been guilty of speeding things up by providing services to the M.D.C. far in excess of those normally provided any redeveloper, public or private, in order to get construction moving as quickly as possible on this project.

Our history of trying to get the construction of these recreational facilities off the ground is one of long and time-consuming effort. Our Development Administrator, Edward Logue, met with M.D.C. Commissioner Whitmore during the first week of August 1966 to lay the groundwork for proceeding forthwith with the recreational facility authorized by a Legislative Act, to be built at Washington Park.

Our legal staff members, John Conley and David Wylie, met with Commissioners Whitmore and Rosenblatt of the M.D.C. in September of 1966 and agreed that the B.R.A. design staff would adapt one of the M.D.C.'s standard designs for the Washington Park site, and would attach the resulting, mutually approved, plans to the Disposition Agreement so that the M.D.C. would know precisely what would be required before it signed the agreement. A second draft of the Disposition Agreement was prepared reflecting this arrangement.

On October 27, 1966, the B.R.A. Board approved 5¢ per sq. ft. as price of the land and authorized the Disposition Agreement. Federal authorities, however, rejected the price of 5¢ per sq. ft. and required 11¢. Despite repeated efforts of Administrator Logue, using all his powers of persuasion and logic, to influence Mr. Horan of H.U.D. to reconsider the price, a final price of 11¢ per sq. ft. was approved by H.U.D. Even at 11¢ per sq. ft., the final price represents less than 5% of the cost to the B.R.A. of acquiring the land and does not include the cost of relocating families.

This parcel, containing approximately 107,000 sq. ft., was secured by the B.R.A. at a cost of approximately \$210,000.00 which cost does not include 20,000 sq. ft. of street belonging to the City of Boston, included in making up the total parcel. The M.D.C. is paying only approximately \$12,000.00 for this entire parcel. These figures alone disprove any M.D.C. claim that land cost was a significant factor in the delay on construction at Washington Park. They also emphasize the great extremes the B.R.A. went to to secure the parcel for this much-needed recreational facility.

On August 3, 1967, the B.R.A. design personnel met with the M.D.C. to discuss Disposition Agreement requiring that 1% of construction costs be used for art. It was made clear to the M.D.C. that the art would be of its selection and that the 1% could be used for something more attractive than a cyclone fence. Although the M.D.C. had known about the art requirement for a full year and had never previously objected to it, it refused to make any expenditure for art. Subsequent remarks, such as "if Roxbury's artistic sensibilities are affected, let them go to the Art Museum," concerning the art clause reflected a total indifference, on the part of the M.D.C. to conditions of human existence.

In order to expedite the much-needed project, on the very next day, Administrator Logue issued a communication to Commissioner Whitmore waiving the art clause.

In view of the above fact, it would seem that neither the cost of the land acquisition nor the 1% art clause should have been contributing factors to the M.D.C.'s delay in building the Washington Park facilities.

In closing, I would point out that geographic environs should not be the criterion upon which our public agencies base their interpretation of legislation concerning specific projects nor should this factor influence their performance of public responsibilities entrusted to them.

The people residing in our city neighborhood areas are entitled to the same consideration given those living in affluent bedroom communities. Undesirable geographic environs should not automatically create second-class citizens in the eyes of our public agencies. Callous remarks such as those attributed to the Commissioners of the M.D.C. only tend to reflect this attitude on the part of some of our public agencies. Are we to infer that the deplorable conditions of the Franklin Park Zoo, despite interminable studies and endless press releases, are but a further reflection of this attitude?

Perhaps the B.R.A.'s highly successful program of planning with the people should at this point be recommended to our various commissions and public agencies.

The M.D.C.'s case for the senselessly long delay in constructing the Washington Park Recreational facilities is weak and defenseless. Let us hope that construction begins immediately.